



# HOW TO...

# Stream webcam video

**A webcam is a great way to monitor your home and entertain friends online, and it's easy to place the footage on a website. Xavier Cortez explains how to stream video images from a webcam**

If you have broadband and a USB webcam, you can easily get the two working together to stream live pictures from your house. You could then detect intruders or spy on your pets while at work, broadcast the view from your window or chart the steady growth of your prize cactus to bemused friends around the world.

The easiest way to do this is to upload a JPEG image to a website at regular intervals. You'll probably find that web space is included in your ISP package. If not, 1&1 ([www.1and1.co.uk](http://www.1and1.co.uk)) and lots of other companies offer suitable packages for a few pounds a month. Make sure your package supports FTP transfers, though. You also need software to transfer images from your webcam to your website. We've gone for Easy Free Web Cam because, true to its name, it's easy to use and free.

**1** Download the software from [www.easyfreewebcam.com](http://www.easyfreewebcam.com). When you first launch the software, click on Allow to any pop-up messages from your firewall software so Easy Free Web Cam can access the internet.

**2** Click on the FTP tab and enter the login details for your web space. You'll need an FTP address to upload files to, and a username and password; your web space provider can provide these details. There's no need to include ftp:// at the beginning of the FTP upload address.

If you already have a website up and running, you can keep all the files the software uploads in a dedicated folder. To do this, type a folder name in the box marked Upload directory (if any).

**3** Besides capturing and transferring a JPEG image, Easy Free Web Cam generates a web page on which to display it. To generate and see this page, click on the Capture tab and then the Capture and Upload button. The process takes a few seconds, after which time you can point your web browser to your website, adding the folder name (if you included one) and /easywebcam.html to the end of the address.

To personalise this page, click Menu on the left and select Show Advanced Settings. Click on the Personal tab to add any details you want to share with viewers of your feed. The software overlays the words Cam 1 on to the webcam image. You need to pay £13.50 to register before you can change this text, but you can turn it off by clicking the Cameras tab and unticking Show. Close the Advanced Settings window to return to the main interface, click the Web tab and add your own message to appear at the top of the web page.

**4** Click the Capture tab and press the up and down arrows to adjust how often an image is captured and uploaded. The default is every five minutes, but you can reduce this to five seconds. Check for web traffic limitations on your service. Each upload contains around 33KB of files, so if you do this every five seconds you'll transfer 16GB of data a month.

You can specify when the software uploads images using the Times tab. Alternatively, click the Xtras tab and untick Load Easy Free Web Cam with Windows – this way, the software will upload new images only when you choose to run it.

**5** If you prefer to use the uploaded image on a different web page, you can do so just as you would with any other image – just link to the file easywebcam.jpg. To create a simple page that shows just the image, click Start, Programs, Accessories, Notepad and enter the code:

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<META HTTP-EQUIV="Refresh" CONTENT="30";URL=index.html">
</HEAD>
<BODY>
<IMG SRC="./easywebcam.jpg">
</BODY>
</HTML>
```

The third line instructs web browsers to reload the page automatically – in this case, every 30 seconds. Click File, Save and save it with the name index.html.

**6** Now you just have to upload this file to your website. You can usually transfer files by FTP using Internet Explorer. Enter ftp:// followed by the upload directory used in Step 2, enter the username and password when requested, and drag and drop the file. Some web space must be accessed via a web interface or dedicated software such as SmartFTP; follow the instructions from your web space provider.

The link to this page is the same as before, but without /easywebcam.html at the end; usually typing [www.yourwebsite.com](http://www.yourwebsite.com) will open the index.html file automatically. **CS**

